Annex "A," Subparagraph 2a,

Political Background

THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

642 The present Finnish Constitution, dating from 1919, includes the basic principles of a modern democracy, and no amendments to its essential parts have been proposed since the two recent wars. Finland by its Constitution is a republic, ruled by the people through their representatives in the Diet, and the executive powers are trusted to a President of the Republic and to his ministers responsible to the Diet.

643 The President is chosen for a period of six years by 300 electors appointed by general election. To be elected a candidate must receive more than one-half of the total votes. The powers of the President are greater than in many other republics. For instance, he may summon

643 the Diet or may dissolve it. He may take the initiative in matters of legislation, and he must approve all governmental proposals. He has the right to veto a proposed law, although another Diet may override this veto. The President also appoints the higher officials, including those of the Army and of the Church, and he has the power of amnesty in individual cases. During peace time he is Commander-in-chief of the army, although during wartime he entrusts the duties connected with this position to a general of his choice. Executive power is controlled by the legislative branch of the government, but in foreign affairs the President has considerable freedom of action, especially if he can rely on the support of several ministers.

646 The Diet consists of one chamber and 200 members. Any Finnish citizen has the right to